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CANADIAN PLAYS for Community Theatres

Dramas Comedies Mystery
Thrillers Social Issue Dramas
Musicals Christmas Plays
Childrens Plays One Act Plays

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A Selected Annotated Bibliography

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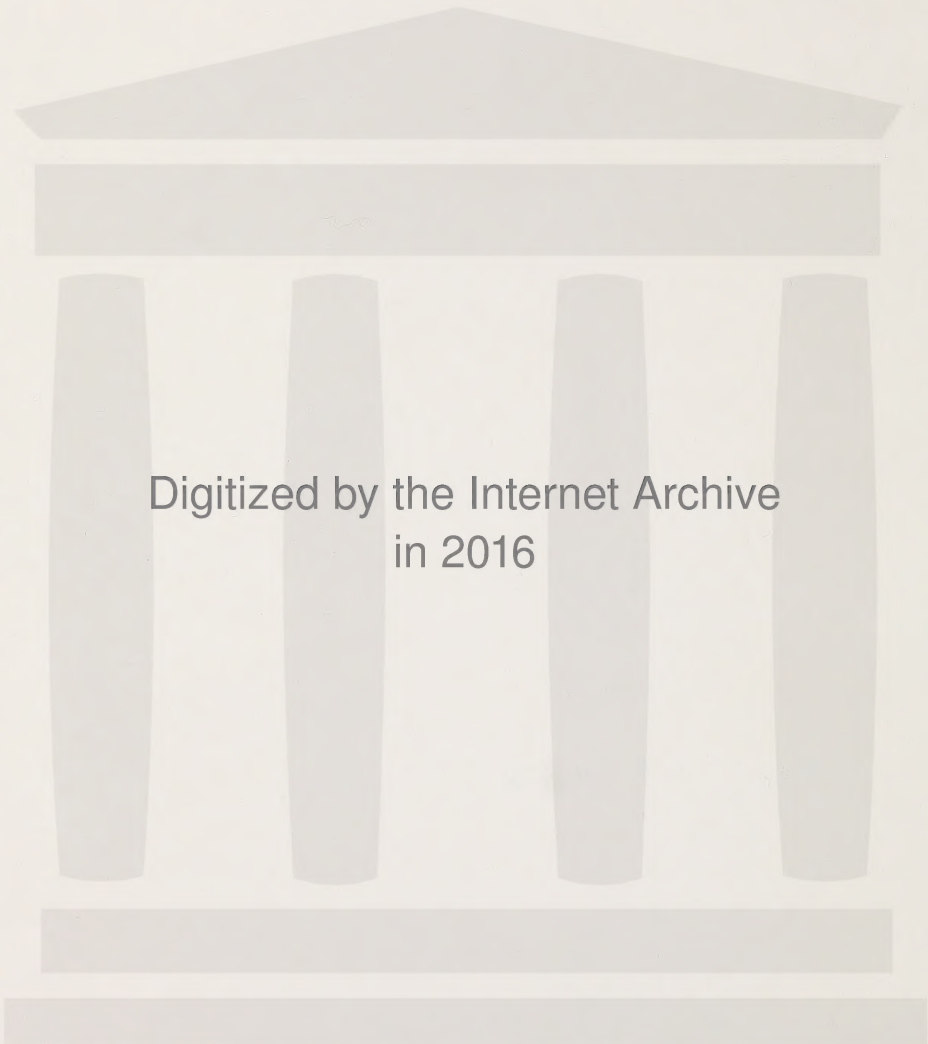
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OCT 12 1988

CANADIAN PLAYS FOR COMMUNITY THEATRES:

A SELECTED ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction 1

Play Annotations

- Dramas 5
- Comedies 8
- Mystery/Thrillers 10
- Social Issue Dramas 11
- Musicals 11
- Christmas Plays 12
- Children's Plays 12
- One Act Plays 13

Where to Find Canadian Plays 14

Other Resources 15

Order Form 17

INTRODUCTION

Often when a community theatre decides to produce a Canadian play, it discovers that:

1. There has been an overwhelming number of Canadian plays written in the past fifteen years;
2. It is difficult to find the necessary information about Canadian plays, and;
3. It is often difficult to acquire the script(s) once a short-list is made or a play is chosen.

The purpose of *Canadian Plays for Community Theatres* is to simplify the comunity theatre's search for Canadian plays for its seasons.

The contents of this booklet are the result of an opinion survey of thirty-three Artistic Directors of professional theatre companies across Canada. This survey, conducted by Alberta Culture and Multiculturalism, Performing Arts Branch, asked each Artistic Director to submit a list of his/her company's seasons for the past three to five years, identifying the Canadian plays within those seasons. As well, each Artistic Director was asked to submit a list of his/her preferred Canadian plays. The forty-two plays included in this booklet are a combination of the most often produced and the most preferred Canadian plays as indicated by the survey.

Canadian Plays for Community Theatres contains annotations of forty-two Canadian plays as well as information on where to find them for reading and/or production purposes. Most of the plays in this booklet have been published and are relatively easy to obtain. In the few cases where the plays are not yet published, it is best to contact Gordon Gordey at Alberta Culture and Multiculturalism, Performing Arts Branch (427-2563), for information on availability. A short list of other resources is also provided in the event that your company may wish to pursue other Canadian plays than those listed here.

It is the intent of the Performing Arts Branch to update *Canadian Plays for Community Theatres* regularly for your use. If you would like to see other information included in future booklets, please contact the Branch with your requests and comments. Your feedback would be greatly appreciated.

The Performing Arts Branch would like to thank Michael James, Thomas Nerling, and all the Artistic Directors who participated in the survey. Without their assistance, the information in this booklet could not have been compiled.

THE PLAYS

DRAMA

Title: **Balconville**
Author: David Fennario
Characters: 4m 4f
Length: 2 Acts

Three families and the neighbourhood drunk sit on their balconies in the Montreal summer. It is election time and Gaetan Bolduc drives around making promises that infuriate the families and their friends. As a result, we see the Quebec working class, French and English, take on the establishment.
Winner of the Chalmers Canadian Play Award, 1979.
Published by Talonbooks

Title: **Blood Relations**
Author: Sharon Pollock
Characters: 4m 4f
Length: 2 Acts

History knows that Lizzie Borden was acquitted, but the questions of the case have been a continuing source of fascination. Lizzie is driven to desperation by family pressure and, although the play begs the intriguing question, 'did she or didn't she?,' the ambiguous complexities unfold as Lizzie's actress friend helps act out the crucial scenes with Lizzie's stage directions.
Winner of the Governor General's Literary Award for Drama, 1981.
Published in Blood Relations and Other Plays by NeWest Press.

Title: **Checkin' Out**
Author: Kelly Rebar
Characters: 2m 2f
Length: 2 Acts

A bittersweet love story set in small town Alberta wherein the dream of city living affects the relationship of a husband and wife.
Play available for reading only from Alberta Culture and Multiculturalism Library.

Title: **Children of the Night**
Author: Gabriel Emmanuel
Characters: 6m 3f children
Length: 2 Acts

The powerful and true story of Dr. Janusz Korczak, father to the orphans of the Warsaw ghetto. The play is set in the period immediately preceding the heroic ghetto uprising, and the audience finds itself in the uncomfortable position of being part of that era, with its awesome and terrible choices.
Published in Einstein and Children of the Night by Playwrights Canada.

Title: **Doc**
Author: Sharon Pollock
Characters: 2m 3f
Length: 2 Acts

Catherine returns home to visit her aging father, a doctor revered and honoured by his community. She confronts, through a series of flashbacks, her thwarted need for her father's love and her late mother's decline into alcoholism. This intensive process leads ultimately to an awareness that a reconciliation with her father, no matter how painful, is a far better thing than their continued estrangement.
Winner of the Governor General's Literary Award for Drama, 1986.
Published by Playwrights Canada.

Title: **Drift**
Author: Rex Deverell
Character: 3m 2f
Length: 2 Acts

A portrait of a young woman who comes to Canada during the thirties and marries a Canadian farm boy, and the struggles of a writer of the next generation trying to recreate this portrait.
Published by Playwrights Canada.

Title: **Farther West**
Author: John Murrell
Characters: 9m 5f (doubling possible)
Length: 2 Acts

Set in the late 1800's, this erotic and violent odyssey centers around the prostitute May Buchanan. Driven relentlessly westward, May attempts to reconcile her sexual freedom and her quest, as a woman, to create her own rules and environment. Her journey through the wild Canadian west culminates in a spectacularly dramatic conclusion.
Winner of the Chalmers Canadian Play Award, 1986.
Published in FARTHER WEST and NEW WORLD by The Coach House Press.

Title: **Les Belles Soeurs**
Author: Michel Tremblay
Characters: 15f
Length: 2 Acts

Germain Lauzon wins a million trading stamps and invites her friends and relatives over to a pasting party. As they put the stamps in the books, the women reveal the frustrations, bitterness and poverty of their lives.
Published by Talonbooks.

Title: **Odd Jobs**
Author: Frank Moher
Characters: 1m 2f
Length: 2 Acts

A young unemployed labourer gets a job doing yard work for an elderly woman, a retired mathematician who comes to rely on his company. When his wife is offered a good job elsewhere, he must decide between staying and going.
Published by Playwrights Canada.

Title: **Of the Fields, Lately**
Author: David French
Characters: 3m 1f
Length: 2 Acts

Ben Mercer comes home to Toronto in 1961 for his aunt's funeral, only to learn of his father's recent heart attack. The complexities of family loves, loyalties, and hurts are revealed as Ben learns that 'you can't go home again.'
Winner of the Chalmers Canadian Play Award, 1973.
Published by General Publishing Co.

Title: **Prague**
Author: John Krizanc
Character: 5m 3f
Length: 2 Acts

Prague 1983. The members of a small theatre company grapple with personal and political oppression resulting from the Russian invasion of 1968. Will they be allowed to perform a play that is a critical allegory of the invasion? Where official versions prevail, truth can literally be made to disappear.
Published by Playwrights Canada.

Title: **Primrose School District #109**
Author: Ted Galay
Characters: 5m 6f
Length: 2 Acts

A progressive schoolmarm comes into a small Ukrainian community in Manitoba during the Depression. When she tries to change things, she meets with hostility and suspicion from the conservative community.
Published by Playwrights Canada as a Compuscript.

Title: **Quiet in the Land**
Author: Anne Chislett
Characters: 6m 2f 2children
Length: 2 Acts

Yock feels compelled to serve his King and country by fighting in the First World War. But when he enlists, he exiles himself from his pacifist family as well as from the girl he loves, and brings about a crisis in his Amish community.
Winner of the Chalmers Canadian Play Award, 1982.
Winner of the Governor-General's Literary Award for Drama, 1983.
Published by The Coach House Press.

Title: **Salt Water Moon**
Author: David French
Characters: 1m 1f
Length: 1 Act (full-length)

On a moonlit night in 1926, Jacob Mercer returns home to Coley's Point to try and win back the heart of 17 year old Mary Snow. A love story full of humour, poetry, and all the magic of a starry Newfoundland evening.
Winner of the Canadian Author's Association Drama Award, 1984.
Published by Playwrights Canada.

Title: **Souvenirs**
Author: Sheldon Rosen
Characters: 5m 2f 1 musician
Length: 2 Acts

The play examines tourists at large in a politically unstable tropical country. The surface gloss of the vacationers tarnishes quickly when they are forced to respond to the impending chaos around them.
Published by Playwrights Canada as a Compuscript.

Title: **Waiting for the Parade**
Author: John Murrell
Characters: 5f
Length: 24 Scenes

Set in Calgary during World War II, five women gather to work for the war effort while their men are overseas. Tragedy and humour interweave as each woman copes with the impingement of war on her everyday life.
Published by Talonbooks.

Title: **White Biting Dog**
Author: Judith Thompson
Characters: 3m 2f
Length: 2 Acts

A suicidal young man, Cape, is rescued by a white dog who gives him a mission: to save his father from death. His mission flounders until the dog's owner, Pony, a projectionist's daughter from Kirkland Lake, helps him by bringing his reluctant mother back into the family. A play about grace.
Winner of the Governor General's Literary Award for Drama, 1984.
Published by Playwrights Canada.

COMEDIES

Title: **Cakewalk**
Author: Colleen Curran
Characters: 1-2m 5f
Length: 2 Acts

Every year on Canada Day the women of a small Canadian town gather to compete in the annual Cakewalk Competition hoping to win the Grand Prize—a trip to Paris and $500.00 spending money. What some people won't do to win!
Published in Four New Comedies by Playwrights Canada.

Title: **Filthy Rich**
Author: George F. Walker
Characters: 4m 2f
Length: 8 Scenes

Tyrone Power, reporter, has retired to write his novel. A murder case, involving corrupt tycoons—the filthy rich—and bankrupt politicians, bursts through his office door and seizes him by the throat. And once again, the cynical reporter with the whiplash wit is on the investigative trail.
Published by Playwrights Canada.

Title: **Garrison's Garage**
Author: Ted Johns
Characters: 4m 1f
Length: 2 Acts

The comfortable world of a small town garage owner is juxtaposed against the inhuman tax system when a Revenue Canada auditor's car needs emergency repairs.
Published in Canadian Theatre Review 45, Winter 1985.

Title: **Jitters**
Author: David French
Characters: 6m 3f
Length: 3 Acts

Repeated disasters befall a theatre company as it struggles to open a new Canadian play in this hilarious backstage comedy. An hysterical playwright, vicious critics, a drunken leading man, a faulty bathroom door and the imminent arrival of a New York producer all add to the mayhem.
Published by Talonbooks.

Title: **Nurse Jane Goes to Hawaii**
Author: Allan Stratton
Characters: 2m 3f
Length: 2 Acts

When Vivien Bliss, writer of Harlequin romances, comes to spend an illicit weekend with a respectably married Edgar Chisholm, she starts a chain of events which involves all the classic elements of farce—confused identities, disguise, long-lost relatives, ambushes, chases and glorious mayhem.
Published by Samuel French Inc.

Title: **Papers**
Author: Allan Stratton
Characters: 1m 2f
Length: 2 Acts

A witty and intelligent comedy about two lonely and articulate academics struggling with their mutual inability to communicate. Amid fiery and provocative one liners, love finally wins out.
Published by Playwrights Canada.

Title: **The Art of War**
Author: George F. Walker
Characters: 4m 2f
Length: 8 Scenes

A battle of styles; a hilarious war between art and artlessness, neo-fascism versus the moral centre.
Published in The Power Plays by The Coach House Press.

Title: **The Black Bonspiel of Wullie MacCrimmon**
Author: W.O. Mitchell
Characters: 9m 1f
Length: 2 Acts

Wullie MacCrimmon, skip of the local curling rink, announces that he would be willing to give anything to win the McDonald Brier Curling Finals. Overhearing this, the devil appears to challenge Wullie to a curling match . . . the prize being Wullie's soul.
Published in Dramatic W.O. Mitchell by Gage Publishing Ltd.

Title: **The Melville Boys**
Author: Norm Foster
Characters: 2m 2f
Length: 2 Acts

Owen and Lee Melville arrive at their uncle's lakeside cabin for a weekend of beer drinking and fishing. Their well laid plans are thrown out of whack by the arrival of two sisters. The women stay the night and become catalysts for a tenderly funny and unsentimental look at four lives in transition.
Published by Playwrights Canada.

MYSTERIES/ THRILLERS

Title: **I'll Be Back Before Midnight**
Author: Peter Colley
Characters: 2m 2f
Length: 2 Acts

Greg and Jan have rented an old farmhouse in the country with the hope that the peace and quiet will help Jan recover from a recent nervous breakdown. The old farmer who owns the house gleefully tells them of the ghosts that haunt the place, and in particular, of a gruesome murder which occurred there some years ago. Humour and horror intermingle as the play races to a startling climax.
Published by Baker's Plays.

Title: **The Murder Game**
Author: W.E. Dan Ross
Characters: 3m 2f
Length: 2 Acts

When Beth moves into an old Ontario farmhouse, she is disturbed to find that the former tenant was murdered. After several mysterious visits and unusual revelations, Beth begins to suspect that she, too, is marked for murder.
Published by Playwrights Canada.

Title: **Wolf Boy**
Author: Brad Fraser
Characters: 3m 3f
Length: 3 Acts

A sometimes funny, sometimes poignant, sometimes horrifying piece about the development of a friendship between two boys in a mental hospital. One of the boys thinks he is a wolf; the other boy has attempted suicide. Play available for reading only from Alberta Culture and Multiculturalism Library.

Title: **Zastrozzi**
Author: George F. Walker
Characters: 4m 2f
Length: 2 Acts

A revenge melodrama inspired by Shelley's novel in which Zastrozzi, the Satan of Europe, engages in a never-ending quest of retribution against his double— the saintly, deluded Verezzi.
Published by Playwrights Canada.

SOCIAL ISSUE DRAMAS

Title: **Fighting Days**
Author: Wendy Lill
Characters: 1m 3f
Length: 2 Acts

Set in the 1910's, the play follows Frances Beyon's journey into the Winnipeg feminist movement, where she eventually clashes with Nellie McClung over pacifism and universal suffrage.
Published in Canadian Theatre Review 42, Spring 1985.

Title: **The Crackwalker**
Author: Judith Thompson
Characters: 3m 2f
Length: 2 Acts

A remarkable, heart-wrenching play about a mildly retarded woman and her friends. The play explores the psyche of those living outside 'normal' society.
Published by Playwrights Canada.

Title: **The Tomorrow Box**
Author: Anne Chislett
Characters: 2m 3f
Length: 2 Acts

The battle of the sexes and the war between generations reaches a crisis when a farmer retires and decides to move to Florida, while his wife is determined to remain on the farm she helped to build.
Published by Playwrights Canada.

MUSICALS

Title: **Love is Strange**
Author: Paul Ledoux with David Young
Characters: 6m 1f
Length: 2 Acts

An infatuated prairie farmer obsessively pursues a famous Maritime songstress.
Published by Playwrights Canada as a Compuscript.

CHRISTMAS PLAYS

Title: **The Other Side of the Pole**
Author: Stephen and Marney Heatley and Edward Connell
Characters: 3m 3f
Length: 2 Acts

In Splithoof, Saskatchewan, Christmas has been banned for ten years. When a young retarded man arrives in town and asks what has happened to Christmas, he arouses the curiousity of Mayor Kringle's daughter Sandy. The two unfrock Mr. Smith who has travelled from the North Pole to seek reconciliation with his son Alex and hopefully to revive the tradition of giving presents and sharing good cheer.
Published in Eight Plays for Young People: Prairie Performance II by NeWest Press.

CHILDREN'S PLAYS

Title: **New Canadian Kid**
Author: Dennis Foon
Characters: 2m 2f
Length: 1 Act

A play about immigrant children in Canada. All the Canadians speak gibberish, while only the newcomer speaks in English. The audience thus hears the thoughts and fears of the new Canadian, while at the same time it is bombarded by a language it can't understand. A play which is at once funny and terribly serious.
Published by Pulp Press.

Title: **The Mystery of the Oak Island Treasure**
Author: Jim Betts
Characters: 5m 2f
Length: 2 Acts

An adventure-mystery in which two young children get mixed up in a search for the famous Oak Island treasure. In the course of one night the children match wits with modern-day pirates, the mysterious lights of Oak Island, and the frightening Ghost in the Red Jacket.
Winner of the Chalmer's Award for Best Children's Play, 1983.
Published by Playwrights Canada.

ONE ACT PLAYS

Title: **Albertine In Five Times**
Author: Michel Tremblay
Characters: 6f

The story of one woman, Albertine, at five different times in her life. The older Albertines warn the younger ones of what is to come, while the younger Albertines are passionate and full of explanations. Together they provide a moving portrait of an extraordinary 'ordinary' woman.
Published by Talonbooks.

Title: **Gimme That Prime Time Religion**
Author: Ben Henderson and Robert Winslow
Characters: 3m 2f

A satire on television evangelism.
Play available through playwrights c/o 9515 - 101 Street, Edmonton, Alberta T5K 0W6.

Title: **Straight Ahead** and **Blind Dancers**
Characters: 1m 1f

Two lyrical one-act plays capturing moments in the life of farm girl Louisa Potter. The first is a script of many voices for one player: Louisa discovers she is pregnant and examines the relationships with the men in her life. In the second play, two years later, we meet Louisa on the 'morning after' with a travelling jazz trombonist.
Winner of the Chalmers Canadian Play Award, 1981.
Published in Canadian Theatre Review 34, Spring 1982.

Title: **The Unveiling**
Author: Leonard Angel
Characters: 4m 3f 1 girl

It's a fall afternoon in a Montreal cemetery. Esther Hirsch's family has gathered at her grave for the traditional unveiling ceremony. As the play progresses, the family itself is unveiled, in a poignant and moving way.
Published by Playwrights Canada.

WHERE TO FIND CANADIAN PLAYS

Reading Rooms

There are two reading rooms in Alberta that carry a complete collection of the Playwrights Union of Canada's plays. These reading rooms are open to the general public.

CALGARY
Calgary Catholic
Board of Education
Department of Fine Arts
7112 - 7th Street, S.W.
Calgary, Alberta
T2V 1E9

EDMONTON
Sandra Faye Guberman
Memorial Library
Department of Drama
3rd Floor, Fine Arts Building
University of Alberta
Edmonton, Alberta
T6G 2C9

Alberta Culture and Multiculturalism Library

This library operates through an inter-library loan arrangement with most community libraries. If you wish to borrow from the Alberta Culture and Multiculturalism Library, contact your local library. For further information about the Culture and Multiculturalism Library, call 427-2571.

Purchasing

All of the published plays in this catalogue are available from the Playwrights Union of Canada. They may be ordered directly from:

Playwrights Union of Canada
8 York Street, 6th Floor
Toronto, Ontario
M5J 1R2
Phone: (416) 947-0201

Orders from individuals must be prepaid or invoiced later. Standard terms are net 30 days, plus 1.5% interest on overdue accounts.

All volume purchasers are eligible for specific discounts. For specific information about performance rights and royalties, please contact Playwrights Union of Canada.

OTHER RESOURCES

For further information on other Canadian plays, you may wish to consult these resources:

1. a) Catalogue of Plays
   b) Canadian Plays for Young Audiences

   These two catalogues are printed annually and are available free of charge from the Playwrights Union of Canada at the address given in the previous section.

2. Alberta's Plays & Playwrights: An Annotated Bibliography 1970-1984

3. Canadian Theatre Review

   Your theatre company may wish to subscribe to this quarterly. Each issue contains a complete Canadian playscript as well as information on what is current in the Canadian theatre scene. Subscriptions can be ordered from:

   Canadian Theatre Review
   Journals Department
   University of Toronto Press
   5201 Dufferin Street
   Downsview, Ontario
   M3H 5T8

4. The Canadian Plays for Community Theatres booklets will be updated on a regular basis by Alberta Culture and Multiculturalism, Performing Arts. For further information contact:

   Alberta Culture and Multiculturalism
   Performing Arts Branch
   Attention: Gordon Gordey
   11th Floor, C.N. Tower
   10004 - 104 Avenue
   Edmonton, Alberta
   T5J 0K5
   Phone: (403) 427-2563

NOTES

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